

Indian Country, and virus legislation

(Continued from page 9)
 But tribes remain uncertain about the \$40 million authorized by H.R.6074, the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act.
 The new law directs the funds to be provided to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has not yet informed Indian Country of how soon the money will be distributed and in what form, whether it be grants, or other methods.

The second legislative package offers a bit more certainty. H.R.6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, puts \$64 million into the IHS budget to cover the costs of COVID-19 testing. The new law also contains provisions to cover the costs of COVID-19 testing when it takes place under purchased/referred care, which happens when patients—like the ones in the Navajo Area—are taken to partner facilities outside of the federal system. It further provides \$10 million for programs that provide nutrition assistance to elderly Native Americans.

With a third package in the works, tribes and key members of Congress are working to ensure Indian Country isn't left out. The overarching goal is to alle-

viate the huge financial pain being seen as a result of the closures of Indian gaming establishments across the nation.

"We cannot ignore the elevated risks faced by Indian Country from this virus," National Congress of American Indians Chief Executive Officer Kevin Allis, a citizen of the Forest County Potawatomi Com-

munity, said.

"The federal government's chronic underfunding of its treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives must end – lives are at risk."

"In the wake of the global pandemic, tribal nations have been left out of the conversation."



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